



# Shakespeare For White Trash: Richard III

*Classic literature translated into Modern English by Crad Kilodney*

## **October 7, 2010 – Author’s Note:**

*“Shakespeare For White Trash” is a series of condensed rewrites designed to make Shakespeare understandable and enjoyable to those who have little or no knowledge of him. The plots and characters are unchanged, but everything else has been radically restyled. Read my versions and you’ll be a Shakespeare fan forever!*

*These plays are intended to be performed, as well as read.*

## **Main Characters**

King Edward IV — King of England

Queen Elizabeth — Queen of England

Prince Edward, and Richard, Duke of York — young sons of Edward and Elizabeth

George, Duke of Clarence (referred to as Clarence) — brother of King Edward

Son and Daughter of Clarence

Richard, Duke of Gloucester — brother of King Edward; later Richard III

Duchess of York — mother of King Edward, Clarence, and Gloucester

Earl Rivers — (a.k.a. Anthony Woodville); brother of Queen Elizabeth

Marquess of Dorset — (a.k.a. Thomas Grey); son of Elizabeth from her previous marriage to Sir John Grey

Lord Grey — (a.k.a. Richard Grey); son of Elizabeth from her previous marriage to Sir John Grey

Lady Anne Neville — widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, and daughter-in-law of the late King Henry VI

Queen Margaret — widow of the late King Henry VI

Earl of Richmond — (a.k.a. Henry Tudor); later King Henry VII

Duke of Buckingham

Lord Hastings

Lord Stanley, Earl of Derby

Sir Richard Ratcliffe

Duke of Norfolk

Sir Robert Brakenbury — Lieutenant of the Tower of London

William Catesby

Lord Lovell

Sir James Blunt

Sir Walter Herbert

Sir William Brandon

James Tyrell

Sir Thomas Vaughan

Lord Mayor of London

Earl of Surrey

Bishop of Ely

Archbishop of Canterbury

Archbishop of York

Earl of Oxford

Keeper in the Tower

Two Murderers

Christopher Urswick

**Gist of the story:** Richard, Duke of Gloucester, is determined to be King of England and is willing to kill anyone who stands in his way. By the time he murders his way to the throne, he has made so many enemies that a rebellion is inevitable. This will be the final War of the Roses between the Yorks (Richard, et al.) and the Lancasters (Earl of Richmond, et al.). Richmond kills Richard at Bosworth and then rules England as King Henry VII. (Shakespeare's portrayal of Richard as a deformed, evil murderer is based on the writings of Thomas More. But there is a large pro-Richard faction that insists that More's history was just Tudor propaganda and that Richard never murdered anyone. The historical record is not absolutely reliable either way, and the evidence against Richard would be considered

circumstantial by modern standards. Nevertheless, the weight of that evidence is heaviest where the Princes in the Tower are concerned. Richard was officially their Protector, he had complete power over them, and he had everything to gain by their deaths. To argue that some other person had them killed — quite conveniently for Richard! — is to stretch my credulity beyond its limits. There is a Richard III Society ([www.richardiii.net](http://www.richardiii.net)) dedicated to rehabilitating Richard's bad reputation, but I take them as a contrary indicator. If you need a society to rehabilitate your bad reputation 500 years after the fact, you probably deserve that reputation.)

**Act 1, Scene 1.** *A street in London. Richard, Duke of Gloucester, comes in. He will speak directly to the audience. The player should take his time with this monologue.*

*Richard:* Good evening. I hope you are all as happy as we are. If you're on the side of the Yorks, then you're happy. We're the Yorks. *(He produces a white rose from his pocket.)* We're known by the white rose. Our enemies are the Lancasters. *(He produces a red rose from his other pocket.)* They're known by the red rose. We've been fighting for years over the throne of England. *(He knocks the roses against each other in mock battle.)* But now we're in power, and they're—not! Actually, both roses come from the same family tree—the Plantagenets. But that's history. You can read about it. Me, I prefer to make history, not read about it. So, right now the Yorks are happy—singing, dancing, partying, having sex. Well, maybe not me. I'm not what you'd call happy in a physical way. God gave me a bad body. I don't even like to look at myself in the mirror. Women don't want me. Even dogs run away from me. Most people are good, and they're happy to be good. I'm bad, and I'm happy to be bad. If God had intended otherwise, he would've given me a good body. And if I'm going to be a villain, I'm going to be the best villain I can possibly be—in a manner of speaking. I have all the qualifications—highly intelligent, ruthless, fearless, ambitious, manipulative, dishonest, and with no conscience whatsoever. I love power. It's all I think about. My good brother Edward is King. That's Edward the Fourth, if you want to look him up. He defeated Henry the Sixth, of the Lancasters—with my help, of course. I'm the best fighter in the family. Henry died recently in the Tower of London—with my help. Eddie's been a good King. But he's not in good health. He won't live much longer. Next in line to the throne are his two young boys—Edward and Richard. My nephews. And I have another older brother, George. But everyone refers to him as Clarence because he's the Duke of Clarence. He's a twit. And I am Richard, Duke of Gloucester. You may address me as “sir,” “my lord,” or “your Grace.” And if I have my way you'll be addressing me as “your Majesty.” But in order for that to happen, everyone who stands between me and the throne has to be eliminated. At the moment, Clarence is my main concern. I'm playing Edward and Clarence against each other. There's a prophecy that someone in the family who has the initial “G” will be a murderer. Of course, that must be George. *(Points accusingly at the audience)* No! Don't even think of Gloucester!—Oh! Would you like to meet my brother George, Duke of Clarence? Here he comes now with—oh, dear!—an armed guard and Brakenbury, the Lieutenant of the Tower. Whatever can it mean? *(Clarence comes in, escorted by an armed guard and Brakenbury.)* Hello, brother! What in the world is going on?

*Clarence:* The King has ordered me to be locked up in the Tower.

*Richard:* Really! Why on earth would he do that?

*Clarence:* Because my name is George.

*Richard:* What's wrong with George? George is a fine name. And anyway, you didn't name yourself. It's the name you were given. Maybe the King just wants to give you a new name and he's arranging a baptismal ceremony in the Tower.

*Clarence:* I don't think so. He keeps referring to some prophecy that someone with the initial "G" will steal the throne or something. Some wizard told him. So he's afraid, and he's locking me up. It's crazy. I'd never do such a thing to my own brother.

*Richard:* You know what I think? His wife put him up to it. Elizabeth. She's a bitch. All her people are untrustworthy. She and her brother, Rivers, told Edward to lock up Lord Hastings.

*Clarence:* Really?

*Richard:* I'm sure of it. He just got out of the Tower today, poor fellow. I tell you, Clarence, we're not safe any more.

*Clarence:* The only people who are safe around here are the Queen's relatives and the messengers the King sends to his mistress, Jane Shore. Hastings had to crawl on his hands and knees to be set free. And he's the Lord Chamberlain!

*Richard:* I know. It's pathetic. The Queen has too much influence. And Jane Shore has a big mouth, too. Listen, take my advice and don't cross the Queen. Just pretend to be sweet to her. That way you won't cross the King either.

*Brakenbury:* Excuse me for butting in, my lord, but the King specifically ordered me to conduct his lordship to the Tower with no stopping for any chit-chat along the way. Nobody's to speak to him.

*Richard:* Hey, we're not talking any treason here, are we, Brakenbury? All we're saying is that the King is wonderful, we adore the Queen and all her relatives, and as for Mistress Shore, the King's girlfriend, she sings like a budgie, and she is reputed to have the best pair of legs in London. Isn't that right? Don't you agree?

*Brakenbury:* I assure your lordship I don't know anything about Mistress Shore's legs.

*Richard:* Well, I hope not, for your sake. Nobody gets to see her legs except her husband—unless you intend to say otherwise.

*Brakenbury:* Don't be angry with me, your Grace. I'm just doing my job. And I didn't hear this conversation.

*Clarence:* Yeah, we know. We're not trying to bust your balls, Brakenbury.

*Richard:* We are the Queen's most obedient slaves—I mean, subjects. Clarence, you go on with the lieutenant, and I'll go speak to the King and see if I can get you out of the Tower. It really hurts me to see you treated this way.

*Clarence:* I really appreciate your concern for me. You're a good brother.

*Richard:* Leave it to me, then. I'll talk to Edward, and I'll tell him whatever it takes to get you out.

*Brakenbury:* If you'll excuse us, your Grace. *(To Clarence)* Come along now, sir. I'm sure everything will be all right.

*Clarence (To Richard):* See you later. And thanks!

*(Clarence, Brakenbury, and the guard leave.)*

*Richard:* That's a one-way trip for you, Clarence. Dumbass.—Hey, here comes Hastings.

*(Lord Hastings comes in.)*

*Hastings:* Hello, my lord!

*Richard:* Glad to see you free again, Hastings. How was it in there?

*Hastings:* Terrible. Whoever got me sent there is going to get some payback from me.

*Richard:* For sure. And from Clarence, too. You've got the same enemies. So wassup?

*Hastings:* I'll tell you. The King is sick. The doctors don't think he'll live much longer.

*Richard:* That's awful. I had no idea. Well, he doesn't take care of himself. He never did. Is he in bed?

*Hastings:* Yes.

*Richard:* We'll go check up on him. You go on ahead. I'll be there shortly.

*Hastings:* All right. *(He leaves.)*

*Richard (To the audience):* I want to see Edward dead, but not before I've finished with Clarence. I've got to get him out of the way first. After that I intend to marry the Earl of Warwick's daughter, Anne Neville. Her father used to be my tutor when I was a boy. He later defected to the Lancasters, and Anne married Edward, Prince of Wales, the son of Henry the Sixth. I killed them both—her husband and her father-in-law. Now I'm going to make it up to her, ha, ha.—Okay, I'm joking. I have a strategic reason for marrying her, that's all.—Oh, so you don't believe I can do it, do you? You think, no fucking way am I going to get a woman to marry me after I killed her husband, right?—Dudes, watch me.

*(He leaves.)*

**Act 1, Scene 2.** *On a street, but a castle is also suggested. Lady Anne escorts the coffin of Henry VI, along with Halberds (guards armed with poleaxes) and Bearers. The coffin is open.*

*Anne:* Set him down for a moment. *(The Bearers set down the coffin. Anne kneels beside it.)* My noble King, can you hear me? It is I, your faithful daughter-in-law, Anne. I know you're in heaven now, with my husband—your son—Edward, Prince of Wales—both of you taken from me by a Yorkist murderer. I curse him with all my heart. May he be crushed like the spider he is. And if he should marry, may his wife be miserable every day of her life.—Ah, my lord, noble King Henry. let your

faithful Anne walk you to Chertsey and your final rest. *(She stands, and the Bearers lift the coffin. Then Richard comes in.)*

*Richard:* You, there! Stop! Put that coffin down.

*Anne:* You! What are you doing here!

*A Halberd:* My lord, let the coffin pass.

*Richard:* You do as you're told! You tilt that halberd one inch toward me and I'll shove it up your ass.

*(The Bearers set down the coffin.)*

*Anne:* Get lost, you devil! You killed him, but you won't steal his soul!

*Richard:* Oh, my dear lady! What an awful thing to say to me.

*Anne:* You devil from hell! Come to admire your handiwork? You did this! *(Points to the body)*  
Look! The blood flows again from the wounds! He knows his murderer!—Oh, God, give me revenge!  
Strike this murderer down now! Murderer of my husband, too!

*Richard:* Oh, my dear lady! This is so unfair!

*Anne:* Any beast has more pity in its heart than you!

*Richard:* Well, I have no pity, so I can't be a beast, can I?

*Anne:* You even admit it!

*Richard:* You're beautiful when you're angry. But please, my lady, at least give me a chance to defend myself.

*Anne:* Defend yourself? What could you possibly say, you monster?

*Richard:* I didn't kill your husband. My brother Edward did.

*Anne:* Liar! Queen Margaret, my mother-in-law, saw you do it! You even threatened her with death!

*Richard:* She provoked me. She accused me of things I didn't do. Anyway, your husband died on the field of battle. War is war.

*Anne:* Tell me you didn't kill King Henry!

*Richard:* Okay. I did kill him.

*Anne:* May you be damned for it!

*Richard:* He's better off in heaven than he was on earth.

*Anne:* And you'd be better off in hell! That's where you belong!

*Richard:* Frankly, I think I belong in your bed.

*Anne:* In your dreams!



*Richard:* Some dreams come true. But don't you think the person who caused the deaths of Henry and your husband is as much to blame as the one who actually did it?

*Anne:* They're one and the same—you.

*Richard:* No. You were the cause. I mean, your beauty. I couldn't think of anyone but you. I had to have you. I'm mad about you!

*Anne:* If I thought my beauty caused their deaths, I'd rip my face to shreds and be ugly forever.

*Richard:* Oh, no! You mustn't think of such a thing! I live for you!

*Anne:* And I live for revenge.

*Richard:* Don't seek revenge on the one who loves you.

*Anne:* You killed my husband.

*Richard:* Only so you could have a better husband.

*Anne:* There was no one better on the face of the earth.

*Richard:* I love you more than he ever could.

*(She spits at him.)*

*Anne:* I wish that were poison!

*Richard:* No poison ever came from sweeter lips.

*Anne:* You filthy toad! Get out of my sight!

*Richard:* If I were out of your sight, then you'd be out of mine, too. And I just couldn't bear that. *(He pretends to cry.)* I've never cried over a woman before. I can't bear it that you hate me.

*Anne:* I loathe you!

*Richard:* Don't treat me with contempt when I love you so much.—Here, take my sword. *(He gives her his sword.)* Put it right there on my breast. And if you really have it in you to kill a man who adores you so much, then stick it in me and end my misery. *(She begins to strike but holds back.)* Why do you hesitate? I killed King Henry, and I killed your husband—but only for your beauty. So, now, kill me if you have a mind to.

*(She begins to strike again but stops.)*

*Anne:* You deserve to be dead—but I can't do it.

*Richard:* Then tell me to kill myself, and I will. Just say the words and you can be the instrument of my death.

*Anne:* You're out of your mind. I don't understand you. Put your damned sword away. I don't want to kill anyone.



*Richard:* Then have you forgiven me?

*Anne:* No.

*(Richard produces a ring.)*

*Richard:* Take this ring. I want you to have it.

*Anne:* I'm not yours.

*(Richard puts the ring on her finger.)*

*Richard:* Look. It fits perfectly. Now grant me one favour.

*Anne:* What?

*Richard:* Let me take the King to be buried so I can shed my own private tears over his grave. You're a Christian, aren't you? You believe in repentance, don't you? Then let me have that moment of repentance. You can go to my house and wait for me. I have more I must say to you. Perhaps you don't want to, but say yes anyway. I can't explain here on the street.

*Anne:* If you really mean what you say—about repentance.

*Richard:* Yes! Believe me! I do!

*Anne:* All right, then. *(To a Halberd)* Please escort me.

*(She leaves with a Halberd.)*

*Richard:* All right, you can take the coffin now.

*Second Halberd:* To Chertsey, my lord?

*Richard:* No. To Whitefriars. And wait for me there.

*(The others carry off the coffin.)*

*Richard (To the audience):* I knew I could con her. I'll keep her as long as it serves my purpose, then I'll dump her.—Gee, maybe I'm a lot more attractive to women than I ever imagined. I ought to hire a stylist and have a complete makeover. Who knows what I could do then?

*(He leaves.)*

**Act 1, Scene 3.** *In the palace. Queen Elizabeth, Lord Rivers, the Marquess of Dorset, and Lord Grey come in.*

*Rivers (To Queen Eliz.):* Try not to worry. He'll get better. I'm sure he will.

*Grey:* Yes, mother. Being depressed only makes it worse. You should let him see you looking cheerful and confident.

*Queen Eliz.:* What would happen to me if he died?

*Grey:* Life goes on. You'd manage.

*Queen Eliz.:* I can't bear to think of it.

*Grey:* Think about your two boys, the Princes—young Edward and Richard. They're fine boys.

*Queen Eliz.:* If the King dies, Gloucester becomes their Protector. He doesn't care about any of us. He hates us.

*Rivers:* Is it official that Gloucester will be their Protector?

*Queen Eliz.:* He's already been chosen. If the King dies, it'll be official.

*(The Duke of Buckingham and Stanley, Earl of Derby, come in.)*

*Grey:* Buckingham and Derby! Hello, my lords!

*Buckingham:* A very good day to you, my lords and your Majesty.

*Stanley:* God give you happiness, your Majesty.

*Queen Eliz.:* Derby, you are so kind. But your wife wouldn't throw me a life preserver if I were drowning.

*Stanley:* Please don't believe that. Perhaps she gives that impression, but I'm sure she doesn't mean it.

*Queen Eliz.:* Did you see the King today?

*Stanley:* Buck and I just came from him.

*Queen Eliz.:* What do you think? Will he recover?

*Buckingham:* Yes, of course, madam. He was in good spirits.

*Queen Eliz.:* What did you talk about?

*Buckingham:* He wants to smooth things over between Gloucester and your relatives, and between them and Hastings. He asked to speak to all of them.

*Queen Eliz.:* Oh, if only!

*(Richard and Hastings come in. Richard clears his throat loudly to get attention.)*

*Queen Eliz.:* My lord Gloucester.

*Richard:* I'm fed up with people bad-mouthing me behind my back to the King. Just because I don't bow and scrape and put on a false show of flattery—like certain other people—that makes me a bad guy, I suppose. Can't a humble, honest man like me—who never had an evil thought toward anyone—live in peace without being slandered?

*Grey:* Who are these "certain other people" you're referring to, if I may ask?

*Richard:* Excuse me for a moment.—Everyone freeze! *(He makes a gesture or snaps his fingers, and everyone else on stage freezes absolutely still. Richard comes to the front of the stage when he begins to speak to the audience and then moves around to identify people as if he were a tour guide in a wax*

*museum.*) Now, here's a nice family snapshot, don't you think? Let me tell you who these people are. This is Queen Elizabeth, my brother Edward's wife. She's the first commoner ever to become Queen of England. She didn't come from a noble family. Her people are the Woodvilles. This guy's a Woodville—her brother Anthony. But now he's known as the Earl Rivers. You see, if you marry into royalty, you can give out titles and promotions to your relatives. I look down on such people. Now, Lizzie was married before—to Sir John Grey. So she was Lady Grey. And these are her sons from her previous marriage. This is Thomas Grey, who now goes by the title of the Marquess of Dorset. Everyone calls him Dorset. And this is the other Grey, Lord Richard Grey. We could make him a marquess, I suppose. Find some rocky, little island covered with birdshit and make him marquess of that. It's okay with me. Over here is Lord Stanley, the Earl of Derby. He married someone from the Lancasters. He's willing to get along with anyone, but he always makes sure he's on the winning side. For him, loyalty is a matter of pragmatism. And this is Lord Buckingham. He's everybody's cousin or in-law and my number one ally. He'd do anything for me. I'm sure he'd even kill for me if I asked him to—and before we're through I may put him to the test. Now Lizzie and Eddie have children of their own—most importantly, two boys who are next in line to the throne. The older one is Prince Edward, and the younger one is Richard, Duke of York. They're just kids. Edward's not here in London. He's at Ludlow Castle in Wales, which is probably the safest place for him right now.—Okay, you got it straight now? Fine.—Unfreeze! *(The other players come back to life. Richard resumes his conversation with Grey.)* Who am I referring to? You and all your people. What did I ever do to deserve your slanders? No wonder the King is sick. You people make him sick by upsetting him with lies about me.

*Queen Eliz.:* You're wrong about that. The King noticed your hostility toward my family first, and then he asked them to explain it.

*Richard:* You Woodvilles. From a little bush you've grown into a mighty tree, haven't you?

*Queen Eliz.:* We've never asked you for anything.

*Richard:* My brother Clarence is in prison because of you.

*Queen Eliz.:* I've never said one single word against Clarence. In fact, I've spoken in his favour. You're very wrong to make any accusation against me.

*Richard:* What about poor Hastings? Tell me you had nothing to do with his imprisonment.

*Rivers:* She could tell you if she wanted, but it's beneath her dignity to answer such an insulting question.

*Richard:* Ah, the Earl Rivers leaps to the defense of his sister!—thanks to whom you have your high position in the world. And who knows what greater heights you might yet achieve if her next husband is a fine young bachelor king.

*Queen Eliz.:* I've taken enough of your insults! You can be sure the King will hear about this. *(Old Queen Margaret comes in discreetly and selects a concealment, from which she may speak aside to the*

*audience.)* I almost wish I weren't Queen of England so I wouldn't have to put up with your harassment.

*Queen Marg. (Aside to the audience):* You shouldn't be Queen of England. That title is rightfully mine.

*Richard:* Go ahead and tell the King. I don't give a shit. I've paid my dues for him on the battlefield.

*Queen Marg. (Aside to the audience):* You killed my son Edward at Tewkesbury.

*Richard:* Who did all the dirty work for Edward? I did.

*Queen Marg. (Aside to the audience):* And what dirty work indeed—like murdering my husband in the Tower. You devil.

*Richard:* Remember where you and your people came from. You Woodvilles were nobodies. You and your first husband, Sir John Grey, were on the side of the Lancasters, and so was your brother Anthony. And Sir John died at Saint Alban's fighting for Queen Margaret.

*Queen Marg. (Aside to the audience):* A hero.

*Richard:* I'm a York, I always have been, and I always will be.

*Queen Marg. (Aside to the audience):* You're a villain, from the day you were born until the day you die.

*Richard:* And poor Clarence, who was married to a Lancaster, broke off with them to be on Edward's side. And what's his reward? He's in prison.—Ach! The only thing wrong with me is that I'm too innocent and honest for this world.

*Queen Marg. (Aside to the audience):* Then go to hell, why don't you?

*Rivers:* Richard, in those days, which we should all put behind us, we supported the lawful King at the time, who happened to be Henry. If you'd been King, we would have supported you.

*Richard:* Me? King? Ha! What a silly idea! The last thing in the world I'd want is to be King.

*Queen Eliz.:* Well, for once I agree with you. Being Queen has brought me no happiness whatever.

*Queen Marg. (Aside to the audience):* Me neither, and I'm the real Queen. *(Margaret steps out of concealment and speaks openly.)* You thieves! You stole the Crown from Henry and me! You know you did! *(To Richard)* You miserable villain! *(Richard turns his back on her and steps toward the audience.)* Don't turn your back on me!

*Richard (To the audience):* It's the queen from hell—Margaret. Widow of the late King Henry. She's the official attack dog of the Lancasters. *(Returning to Margaret)* How nice to see you again, madam. Weren't you banished on pain of death?

*Queen Marg.:* I was. But exile is worse than death. All of you people have stolen what is rightfully mine. And you, Richard—you took my husband and my son.

*Richard:* You killed my father, Richard, Duke of York! But not before showing him a bloody rag soaked with the blood of my brother Edmund! My father cursed you, and God fulfilled that curse!

*Others:* Yes! Yes!

*Queen Marg.:* If God delivers so much death and evil to fulfill a curse, then let him hear mine! *(To Queen Elizabeth)* May your King die. May your sons Edward and Richard die violently before they reach manhood. May you live to see another woman sit on your throne. And may you die neither a wife, a mother, nor a queen. *(To Rivers, Dorset, and Hastings)* And you—Rivers, Dorset, and Hastings—you stood by when my son was killed. May you all die by unnatural causes!

*Richard:* That's enough, you witch!

*Queen Marg.:* And you, Richard Gloucester—I would not leave you out. May heaven wait until you've reached the limits of your power and then crush you. May you mistake your friends for enemies and your enemies for friends. And may your conscience torment you and your sleep be filled with nightmares.

*Richard:* The same to you—double!

*Queen Eliz. (To Queen Marg.):* Now you are cursed!

*Queen Marg.:* Fool! You don't see this monster for what he is. Are you blind? Are you stupid? Someday you'll remember my words and you'll wish you'd listened!

*Hastings:* She's a Lancaster. She's full of hatred for all the Yorks.

*Queen Eliz.:* Of course.

*Dorset:* She's crazy.

*Queen Marg.:* Shut up, you!

*Dorset:* I can speak if I want to. I'm the Marquess of Dorset.

*Queen Marg.:* You shit stain! The ink on your title isn't even dry yet!

*Buckingham:* Please stop this! This kind of talk is shameful!

*Queen Marg.:* The shame is all on them—not you, Buckingham. I have no quarrel with you. I wish only good things for you. *(She grabs Buckingham closely by the lapels and speaks in a hushed tone.)* Don't trust Richard. Beware of him.

*Richard:* What was that?

*Buckingham:* Nothing. I wasn't listening.

*Queen Marg. (To Buckingham):* Remember what I said. *(To the others)* Think I'm a witch? You'll remember me as a prophet. Richard will destroy you all.

*(She leaves.)*

*Buckingham:* Now I'm upset.

*Rivers:* She's lost her mind. She ought to be locked away in a lunatic asylum.

*Richard (Adopting a conciliatory tone):* She's been hurt too much. Of course, she's not in her right mind. Who would be after what she's been through? I feel bad for her. I really do. I'm sorry I caused her any pain.

*Queen Eliz.:* Well, my conscience is clear. I never did anything to her.

*Richard:* But all of you benefited from whatever harm I may have done to the Lancasters—which was all for a good cause—getting Edward on the throne. He's forgotten all that. And he's forgotten Clarence's loyalty, the poor guy. May God pardon those who are responsible for Clarence being locked up.

*Rivers:* That's very Christian of you.

*Richard:* Yes. I am a good Christian, aren't I? *(Aside to the audience)* Of course, I'm the one who got Clarence in trouble, so I don't mind praying for a pardon.

*(Catesby comes in.)*

*Catesby:* Madam, the King is asking for you, and the Duke of Gloucester and the other lords.

*Queen Eliz.:* Yes, Catesby.—Lords, come with me, please.

*(Everyone leaves except Richard.)*

*Richard (To the audience):* You see how easy it is to con these people?—Oh! Here are the two murderers I hired to kill my brother Clarence.—Hey, how's it going, guys? Are you all set?

*First Murderer:* We're good to go, sir. We just need a warrant so we can get into his cell.

*Richard:* Got it right here. *(He hands over a document.)* When you're done, go to my house at Crosby Place. Now do this fast. Don't say anything to him, and don't listen to him. He'll try to talk you out of it, but don't listen. Just get it over with.

*First Murderer:* Yes, sir. Don't worry.

*Richard:* And remember what you're doing this for. *(He jingles coins in his pocket, or shakes his purse.)*

*Murderers:* Yes! Yes! Ha! Ha!

*(The Murderers and Richard leave separately.)*

**Act 1, Scene 4.** *In the Tower of London. Clarence and the Keeper come into Clarence's cell.*

*Keeper:* You're awfully gloomy today, sir. What's the reason?

*Clarence:* I had such a nightmare.

*Keeper:* About what?

*Clarence:* I was on a ship with my brother Richard. It was in the Channel. And the ship was tossing, and we lost our balance, and he accidentally knocked me overboard. And I fell all the way to the bottom, and I thought, "I'm drowning." And on the bottom there were all these wrecked ships, and all these dead bodies, and anchors, and treasure chests with the treasure spilled out. And the jewels on the seabed were like eyes looking at me.

*Keeper:* And you had time to take all this in while you were drowning?

*Clarence:* Yes. I was holding my last breath, and I was saving it until I was ready to die. And finally I let it go—and then I knew I was dead. And then I found myself in this big, dark place like a cave. And my father-in-law was there—the Earl of Warwick. And he said, "What punishment shall we give to Clarence?" And then he disappeared, and this ghost appeared, all covered with blood. And the ghost said, "It's Clarence! He killed me at Tewkesbury! Get him!" And all these demons appeared and surrounded me, and they were howling.—And then I woke up. And I thought, "That was hell. I have seen hell."

*Keeper:* My goodness! I hope I never have a dream like that!

*Clarence:* Keeper, I have done some things in my life.—Perhaps I did wrong. I don't know. But I did them for Edward's sake.—Keeper, don't leave me yet. I'm so tired. I need to sleep. Just stay with me until I fall asleep.

*Keeper:* Yes, yes. You have a nice, little nap, and you'll feel much better.

*(Clarence lies down and falls asleep. Then Brakenbury comes in.)*

*Keeper:* Shh! Don't wake him, Lieutenant. He's in a bad way. He needs some sleep.

*Brakenbury:* Look at him. A duke asleep. But is he still a duke in his dreams? I wonder.

*Keeper:* I wonder, too.

*(The two Murderers come in.)*

*Brakenbury:* Who are you? What are you doing here?

*First Murderer:* We're here to see Clarence. We have a letter. *(He hands Brakenbury the letter. Brakenbury reads it.)*

*Brakenbury:* So you're taking charge of Clarence, are you? Well, I don't know what this is all about, and I'm not sure I want to know. Clarence is sleeping. There are the keys. I'll go report to the King.

*First Murderer:* Yes, sir, you do that. Very good.

*(Brakenbury and the Keeper leave.)*

*Second Murderer:* Well? Should be stab him while he's asleep?

*First Murderer:* No. That would be cowardly. We'd be damned for it.



*Second Murderer:* Oh, I wish you hadn't said that. Now I'm afraid.

*First Murderer:* Afraid to kill him?

*Second Murderer:* No, not to kill him—but to be damned for it.

*First Murderer:* Come on, now. You're in this with me. You agreed to do it.

*Second Murderer:* I don't know. I don't think I want to.

*First Murderer:* Should I go back to the Duke of Gloucester and tell him we won't do it?

*Second Murderer:* No, no. Just give me a moment to collect myself.

*First Murderer:* We are getting paid for this, remember. Just think of that money.

*Second Murderer:* Ah, yes, the money.—But my conscience.—No, I just won't think about that.

*First Murderer:* I wish you hadn't said that.

*Second Murderer:* Said what?

*First Murderer:* Conscience. Now you're making me have second thoughts.

*Second Murderer:* This is stupid. Let's just get it over with.

*First Murderer:* Should I bash his head in?

*Second Murderer:* Whatever you like.—Uh, oh. He's waking up.

*(Clarence wakes up.)*

*Clarence:* Who are you? What do you want?

*First Murderer:* We were sent.

*Clarence:* Sent for what?—Why are you looking at me like that? Were you sent to—murder me? *(The Murderers nod.)* What have I done to offend you?

*First Murderer:* Not us. The King.

*Clarence:* Let me talk to him! He's my brother!

*Second Murderer:* It's too late for that.

*Clarence:* But what have I done? What's my crime? I haven't had any trial! This is illegal! You can't do this!

*First Murderer:* We're following orders.

*Second Murderer:* From the King.

*Clarence:* But why? Tell me why!

*Second Murderer:* For breaking your oath to fight for King Henry.

*First Murderer:* And for killing his son.

*Clarence:* No! That's impossible! I fought for my brother Edward! He wouldn't punish me for that! Whatever happened on the battlefield was for his sake! And I don't know who I killed! The fighting was confused!—No. There's another reason, isn't there? It's my initial "G." That's it, isn't it?—Listen to me, if Edward hired you to kill me, my brother Richard will pay you double to spare me!

*Second Murderer:* No, he won't. Your brother the Duke of Gloucester hates you.

*Clarence:* No! He loves me! You talk to him! You'll see!

*First Murderer:* You are a fool, sir. It was Gloucester who sent us.

*Clarence (Shaking his head):* I don't believe it.—I don't believe it.

*First Murderer:* I'm sorry for you, sir—but you must die.

*Clarence:* Would you really do that? Would you damn your own souls with the sin or murder? Do you think God will not punish you for this?

*Second Murderer (To the First):* What should we do?

*First Murderer:* We should do what we were sent for.

*Clarence (To Second Murderer):* You don't want to do this! I can see it in your eyes! You're not that cold-hearted! *(The First Murderer moves behind Clarence and takes out his knife.)* You must let me live! I have a wife and children!

*Second Murderer:* I don't want—look out!

*(The First Murderer stabs Clarence, who falls dead.)*

*First Murderer:* There. It's done.

*Second Murderer:* Oh, God. I wish we hadn't come here.

*First Murderer:* You were no help at all, and I'll tell the Duke so.

*Second Murderer:* Go ahead and tell him. Tell him I wish I'd never had anything to do with this. In fact, you can have my share of the money.

*(Second Murderer leaves.)*

*First Murderer:* Go on, you coward! You're damn right I'll keep your share of the money!—And once I get that money, I'm getting out of London. As far away as possible.

*(He regards Clarence's body briefly and then leaves.)*

**Act 2, Scene 1.** *In the palace. A flourish of trumpets. The ailing King Edward and his Queen come in, followed closely by Dorset, Grey, Rivers, Hastings, Catesby, Buckingham (Scales optionally), and Stanley. (Stanley should come in here because his later part of the scene is deleted.)*

*King Edward:* My friends, I don't know how much longer I have to live. But before I die I want to put an end to any old grievances among you. So now I would ask you all to embrace each other and promise each other peace and love forever.

*(Everyone embraces in a prolonged and confused way for comical effect, saying "Sorry," "My friend," "Love you," "Peace," etc. The director has wide latitude here. When the peacemaking is over, Richard walks in. Ratcliffe is deleted from this scene.)*

*Richard:* Hey, everyone! Boy, you all look happy!

*King Edward:* Happy indeed, brother! We've all agreed to bury the hatchet and forget any old grievances.

*Richard:* Excellent idea! I would not be left out! No, sir! I want everyone here to think of me as a friend. And, believe me, I have nothing but love in my heart for all of you—Buckingham...Rivers...Dorset...Hastings...(Scales...)...Stanley...Catesby...and, uh, what's your name, uh—Grey. Right. Whatever oaths have been sworn, count me in retroactively. I thank God for my humility and sense of brotherhood.

*Queen Eliz.:* Oh, if only all grievances could be settled so peacefully, it would be a better world. The only one missing is Clarence. *(To the King)* My dear, since you've forgiven him, you should bring him back from the Tower.

*King Edward:* I thought he would be here by now.

*Richard:* Madam—brother—don't you know? Clarence is dead.

*Others:* What!

*King Edward:* How can that be? I sent an order revoking his death sentence.

*Richard:* Oh, dear! I'm afraid your second order didn't get there in time. He's already been executed.

*King Edward:* My poor brother!—My own brother who fought for me at Tewkesbury!—I never meant—Why didn't any of you speak up? Why didn't you intervene? You knew I was sick. You knew I wasn't in my right mind.—Bloody hell!—Hastings—some of you—help me to my room.

*(Hastings and the others, except Richard and Buckingham, escort the King and Queen out, saying "We're sorry" over and over. Richard holds back Buckingham by the sleeve to speak to him privately.)*

*Richard:* Did you notice how guilty the Queen's relatives looked when I said Clarence was dead?

*Buckingham:* Uh—yes.

*Richard:* They put the King up to it in the first place. God will punish them for that. Anyway, let's go comfort the King. What do you say?

*Buckingham:* Whatever you say.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 2, Scene 2.** *In the palace. The old Duchess of York comes in with Clarence's son and daughter. The girl is probably about 15 or 16; the boy is younger.*

*Boy:* Grandma, where's daddy? Is he dead?

*Duchess:* No, no, he's not dead.

*Girl:* But, grandma, you were crying. You said, "My poor son."

*Duchess:* No, dear. I was crying because the King is sick. Why would I cry over someone who's already dead?

*Girl:* Then he is dead! You're admitting it! Uncle Edward ordered daddy to be killed, didn't he?

*Boy:* I want to kill him!

*Duchess:* No, no, my dears! You're wrong. The King loves you very much. He didn't do it.

*Boy:* Yes, he did. Uncle Richard told us. He said Auntie Elizabeth told Uncle Edward to put daddy in prison. And Uncle Richard said he would be like a daddy to us.

*Duchess:* Richard!—I'm so ashamed. How could he turn into such a liar?—And worse.

*Boy:* Was Uncle Richard lying?

*Duchess:* Yes.

*Boy:* No. He wouldn't lie.

*(Queen Elizabeth comes in, disheveled, with Rivers and Dorset.)*

*Queen Eliz. (Crying):* What's the use! I've nothing to live for!

*Duchess:* What's the matter?

*Queen Eliz.:* Edward is dead! I can't go on!

*Duchess:* What do you know of grief, Elizabeth? You've lost your husband, but you have your children to comfort you. I lost my husband long ago, and now two sons are taken from me at once. And who's left to me? A son that I'm ashamed of.

*Queen Eliz.:* No widow ever suffered the pain that I feel!

*Dorset:* Mother, compose yourself. You should be grateful that you had him as long as you did. He died a natural death—with dignity.

*Rivers:* That's right, sister. You have to be sensible now. You have to think like a queen. You should send for Prince Edward. Have him come to London right away and be crowned.

*(Richard, Buckingham, Stanley, and Hastings come in. Ratcliffe is deleted from this scene.)*

*Richard:* There, there, now, sister. Be calm. It's a loss for everyone. We all have to be strong now.—Oh! Mother! I didn't see you. Give me your blessing in this difficult time.

*Duchess (In a cool tone):* May God bless you and make you good and wise.

*Richard (Aside to the audience sarcastically):* Never mind wishing me a long life, right?

*Buckingham:* Now look, everyone. Let's try and get over this. Let's think about crowning a new King. A couple of us should go to Ludlow and bring back Prince Edward.

*Rivers:* Why only a couple of us?

*Buckingham:* The fewer the better, to be on the safe side. Keep a low profile. We don't want Yorks and Lancasters at each other's throats again before we've even brought the Prince back to London.

*Richard:* He's right. We've got a fragile peace right now. And Edward made us all promise to be peacemakers, and I intend to do just that.

*Rivers:* So do I. We shouldn't have a big ceremony for the coronation. It might be provocative. Buckingham's right. A couple of people can go and bring Prince Edward back quietly.

*Hastings:* Yes, but who?

*Richard:* Elizabeth, why don't you and my mother and the other lords go and talk it over?—Buckingham, stay with me for a minute.

*(Everyone else leaves.)*

*Buckingham:* You and I should go, Richard. That way we can keep the kid away from his mother and her people.

*Richard:* You read my mind, Buck. That's exactly what we should do. But before we leave, I have to see Ratcliffe and give him some instructions. I want to make sure certain people are out of the way. Come on.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 2, Scene 3.** *This scene is deleted.*

**Act 2, Scene 4.** *In the palace. The Archbishop of York, the Queen, the Duchess of York, and young Richard, Duke of York, come in. Young Richard is 9 years old.*

*York:* Mother, when is Edward coming home?

*Queen Eliz.:* Very soon. I'll bet you can't wait to see him again.

*York:* I wonder how tall he is by now.

*Queen Eliz.:* The Archbishop says you're almost as tall as he is.

*York (To the Archbishop):* Am I really?

*Archbishop:* Yes!

*(A Messenger rushes in.)*

*Messenger (To the Queen):* Madam, I have some bad news.

*Queen Eliz.:* What is it?

*Messenger:* Lord Rivers and Lord Grey have been arrested. And Sir Thomas Vaughan, too. They've been taken to Pomfret Castle.

*Duchess:* Oh whose orders?

*Messenger:* Gloucester and Buckingham.

*Archbishop:* But why? What have they done?

*Messenger:* I don't know the reason, your Grace. I'm sorry.

*Queen Eliz.:* Well! Now I'm beginning to see where all this is leading—the systematic destruction of my family—and an attack on the throne!

*Duchess:* Haven't I seen enough bloodshed and misery in all my years? Must I live longer and see more?

*Queen Eliz. (To York):* Richard, you'll come with me. I'll take you somewhere where you'll be safe.

*Archbishop (To the Queen):* Madam, take the royal seal with you. It's best you should have it. Come. I'll conduct you to a sanctuary.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 3, Scene 1.** *A London street. A trumpet flourish. The young Prince Edward (12 years old) comes in with Gloucester, Buckingham, the Lord Cardinal (Archbishop of Canterbury), Catesby, and others. (The suggestion is that Gloucester and Buckingham actually went to Wales to bring back Prince Edward, as they previously said they would.)*

*Richard:* Well, here we are, my young Prince! I dare say you scarcely remember London.

*Prince Edward:* What a bleedin' dump! Is this what I left Ludlow for? And where is everyone? Where's my mother? Where's my grandmother? And what really happened to Uncle Clarence?

*Richard:* Now, now, heh, heh. You've had a long trip. You're obviously tired.

*Prince Edward:* So you're not going to tell me, is that it?

*Richard:* Ah, nephew, you're still an innocent boy. You're only twelve. You're too young to know who you can trust and who you can't. Your Uncle Clarence was not the good fellow he appeared to be.

*Prince Edward:* Good thing you told me. I'll have to pay close attention to you, Uncle Richard.

*Richard (Momentarily caught off guard):* Indeed.—Oh, here comes the Lord Mayor to greet you.

*(The Lord Mayor and some citizens come in.)*

*Lord Mayor:* God bless your Grace—soon to be King! Welcome!

*Prince Edward:* Thank you. But where's my mother and my brother, Richard? And where's Lord Hastings?

*Buckingham:* Ah, here comes Hastings now.

*(Lord Hastings comes in, out of breath.)*

*Hastings:* Your Grace!

*Prince Edward:* Hello, Lord Hastings. Where's my mother?

*Hastings:* Your Grace, your mother and your brother have taken sanctuary in Westminster Abbey. Your brother wanted to be here to meet you, but your mother wouldn't let him.

*Buckingham:* What? That's not very nice, I must say.—Lord Cardinal, you should go and speak to the Queen and persuade her to let you bring the boy back with you.—Hastings, why don't you go with him? If the Queen refuses, bring him back by force if you have to.

*Prince Edward:* What's going on? Is there something wrong?

*Buckingham:* No, no, your Grace. It's a small matter.

*Cardinal:* My lord Buckingham, I can speak to the Queen, but if she refuses to let the boy come back with me, I don't see how I can take him by force. It's a sanctuary, after all. It's a protected place. I'd be committing a crime.

*Buckingham:* No, you wouldn't. The boy doesn't need sanctuary, and he's too young to claim sanctuary.

*Cardinal:* Well, if you insist.—Lord Hastings, will you come with me?

*Hastings:* Yes. Let's go.

*(The Lord Cardinal and Hastings leave.)*

*Prince Edward:* Uncle Richard, where am I going to stay until the coronation?

*Richard:* Well, now, I have an excellent idea. How about the Tower of London?

*Prince Edward:* The Tower? But that's a prison.

*Richard:* Oh, no, no, no, ha, ha! Only a small part of it is used for a prison. The rest of it is quite, um, historic. You'll have a nice, big room. And you can look at the boats on the river. You like boats, don't you?

*Prince Edward:* No. I hate boats.

*Richard:* Well, we'll find something to keep you amused, don't worry.

*Prince Edward:* When Uncle Clarence was in the Tower, was he given a room with a view so he could look at the boats?



*Richard:* Don't go there, okay? *(Aside to the audience)* This kid's too smart for his own good. *(To the Prince)* You and your brother will have a nice time in the Tower.—Oh, here he is!

*(Young Richard, Duke of York, comes in with Hastings and the Lord Cardinal.)*

*Prince Edward:* Richard!

*York:* Edward! *(They embrace.)* You're going to be King! Won't that be exciting!

*Prince Edward:* I didn't want it to happen this soon.

*Richard:* So! Guess what! You boys are going to stay together in the Tower! Won't that be swell! Cousin Buckingham and I will go get your mother, and she'll meet you there.

*York:* I'm afraid of the Tower!

*Richard:* Why?

*York:* I might see Uncle Clarence's ghost! Grandma told me he was murdered there.

*Prince Edward:* Oh, so that's what happened!

*Richard:* No, no. Your grandmother's confused. He wasn't murdered. He was executed.

*Prince Edward:* Why?

*Richard:* I'll explain it to you at a more proper time.

*York:* I don't want to see his ghost!

*Prince Edward:* I'm not afraid. There's no such thing as ghosts anyway. We'll go to the Tower, Richard. It'll be all right.

*(A trumpet sounds. Everyone leaves except Richard, Buckingham, and Catesby.)*

*Buckingham:* Catesby, you're with us on this. Do you think we can get Hastings on our side to put Richard on the throne?

*Catesby:* I doubt it. Hastings was very close to King Edward. I don't think he would go along with any plot against the Prince.

*Buckingham:* What about Stanley?

*Catesby:* He doesn't have a mind of his own. He'll do whatever Hastings does.

*Buckingham:* Okay, do this. Go talk to Hastings and sound him out, but pretend it's all theoretical. There's no plot or anything. If he reacts positively, try to recruit him. Otherwise, drop it. Invite him to the coronation anyway. We'll have two meetings tomorrow—one for those who are in with us, and one for those who aren't. You'll be at both of them.

*Richard:* You can tell Hastings his old enemies will die tomorrow at Pomfret. That might help.

*Catesby:* I'll do that.

*Richard:* Give us a report tonight. We'll be at Crosby Place.

*Catesby:* Fine. (*Catesby leaves.*)

*Buckingham:* What if Hastings won't go along?

*Richard:* Then he'll have to be wasted.—When I'm King, how'd you like to be Earl of Hereford?

*Buckingham:* I would sure like that a lot!

*Richard:* Consider it done. Let's have an early dinner so we can work on our plans.

(*They leave.*)

**Act 3, Scene 2.** *Outside the front door of Hastings' house. A Messenger knocks.*

*Hastings (From inside):* Who is it?

*Messenger:* A messenger from Lord Stanley, sir.

(*Hastings opens the door.*)

*Hastings:* At this hour of the night? What's so important?

*Messenger:* Lord Stanley wishes you to know that he had a dream that a boar cut off his head. A white boar.

*Hastings:* A white boar?—Oh! That's Gloucester's coat of arms. What else?

*Messenger:* He says there are going to be two meetings held tomorrow, and one of them could have bad consequences for both of you. He suggests strongly that you flee with him to the north to save yourself.

*Hastings:* Huh! What an imagination! Tell your boss there's nothing to worry about. We'll be at one meeting, and Catesby will be at the other, so we'll know whatever's going on. And as for his bad dream, it's just nerves, that's all. If we run away now, how will that look? It'll look suspicious. Gloucester won't like it. Look, tell Lord Stanley to come on over and we'll go to the Tower and meet Gloucester, and everything will be fine.

*Messenger:* I'll tell him, sir. Good night.

(*The Messenger leaves. Then Catesby arrives.*)

*Catesby:* Good morning, Hastings.

*Hastings:* Catesby! What're you doing up at this hour?

*Catesby:* I was just passing by. I was hoping you'd be up.

*Hastings:* Why's that?

*Catesby:* Oh, well—so much has been happening lately. There's a lot on everyone's mind. So many changes. So much uncertainty. Some people are wondering if perhaps Richard should be King.

*Hastings:* Gloucester? You mean Gloucester should be King instead of Prince Edward?

*Catesby:* Um, yes.

*Hastings:* No bloody way! Is that what Gloucester intends to do—steal the Crown?

*Catesby:* No, no. I wouldn't put it that way. Let's just say that—theoretically—there was a desire on the part of some people to make Richard King. And he wanted you to support him—especially since your old enemies are going to be executed tomorrow at Pomfret.

*Hastings:* Well, I'm glad to be rid of my enemies, but as for Richard becoming King, it's out of the question. I'd sooner die than support him in such a scheme.

*Catesby:* Well, you keep that happy thought, then. Prince Edward will be crowned King. You'll be at the coronation, of course.

*Hastings:* Of course.—You know, you had me worried there for a moment.

*Catesby:* Oh, no, no, no! You have nothing to worry about.

*Hastings:* Those who got me in trouble with King Edward are going to get what's coming to them. And certain others are going to get a rude surprise, too. Mark my words.

*Catesby:* Indeed.

*Hastings:* They think they stand in good stead with Gloucester and Buckingham the way we do, but they'll find out otherwise.

*Catesby:* Richard and Buckingham look up to you—*(Aside to the audience)* Hanging from a scaffold.

*Hastings:* I've always assumed that.

*(Stanley arrives.)*

*Stanley:* Good morning, Hastings—Catesby. I don't know about you, but I don't like the idea of separate meetings.

*Hastings:* Trust me, Stanley. Our position is secure.

*Stanley:* Yeah. The guys in Pomfret thought so, too. I sure hope you're right.

*Hastings:* Sure, I'm right. You and your dreams! We'll go to the Tower, and you'll see.—By the way, the guys in Pomfret are going to be executed.

*Stanley:* They don't deserve it.—All right, let's go.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 3, Scene 3.** *In Pomfret Castle. Sir Richard Ratcliffe and Halberds bring in the prisoners—Rivers, Grey, and Vaughan.*

*Rivers:* Richard Ratcliffe—fucking rat! Ratso Ratcliffe! A low-down rat—that's what you are!

*Grey:* Fucking bastards—you and Gloucester and Buckingham! God should strike you dead if you lay a finger on Prince Edward!

*Vaughan:* You'll pay for this, Ratcliffe! I hope the devil turns you into a rat, and you have to live in a sewer filled with shit, and then somebody comes along with a stick and smashes your fucking head, and all your miserable rat guts spill out!

*Ratcliffe:* Go ahead and shoot your mouth off, Vaughan. All three of you. What the hell do I care? You guys have about five minutes left to live.

*Grey:* Margaret's curse is coming true.

*Rivers:* It'll catch up with Richard sooner or later.—Oh, my poor sister! God protect her and those two boys!

*Ratcliffe:* The time has come. Say your goodbyes.

*(The three prisoners embrace.)*

**Act 3, Scene 4.** *Buckingham, Stanley, Hastings, the Bishop of Ely, Ratcliffe, and Lord Lovell come in (optionally with others) and sit at a table.*

*Hastings:* So. We have to decide what day to hold the coronation.

*Bishop of Ely:* Tomorrow would be good.

*Buckingham:* What does Richard prefer?

*Bishop of Ely:* You should know. You're tight with him.

*Buckingham:* He doesn't necessarily tell me everything, my Lord Bishop.—Hastings, has he said anything to you? You're his close friend.

*Hastings (Reacting with a smile):* No, he hasn't said a word to me. But I think he'll agree with any day you suggest. In fact, I'll agree in his behalf, since he hasn't shown up yet.

*(Richard comes in.)*

*Bishop of Ely:* Oh, here he is.—Good morning, my lord!

*Richard (Cheerfully):* My Lord Bishop of Ely, good morning!—Oh, and Lord Lovell's here, too!

*Lovell:* Good morning, my lord.

*Richard:* I'm sorry I'm late, everyone. I slept in. I hope I haven't delayed any important business.

*Buckingham:* We were going to pick a day for the coronation. Hastings was going to be your proxy.

*Richard:* Quite all right.—My Lord Bishop, the last time I was at your house, I noticed you had some wonderful strawberries in your garden. Do you suppose you could send someone to bring me some?

*Bishop of Ely:* I'd be glad to. I'll go attend to it right now. Excuse me.

*(The Bishop goes out.)*

*Richard:* Buckingham, can I have a word with you? *(Richard draws Buckingham aside and speaks privately.)* Catesby says that Hastings is against it. Says he'd sooner die.

*Buckingham:* Let's step outside.

*(Richard and Buckingham leave the room.)*

*Stanley:* I think tomorrow is too soon for the coronation. I don't have the right clothes. Could we put it off a day or two?

*(The Bishop of Ely returns.)*

*Bishop of Ely:* Where's Gloucester? I sent for the strawberries.

*Hastings:* Richard's in a good mood today, don't you think? You can always tell with him, just by reading his face.

*Stanley:* You think so? And what did you read just now?

*Hastings:* He's happy with all of us.

*Stanley:* I sure hope so.

*(Richard and Buckingham return, but now Richard is clearly angry.)*

*Richard:* What should we do with a person who conspires to kill me with witchcraft and has already used it to do me bodily harm? *(He looks directly at Hastings.)*

*Hastings:* My lord, speaking as one who loves you, I would say that any such person deserves to die.

*Others:* Yes! Yes!

*Richard (Baring his misshapen arm):* Then look at this! This is the result of witchcraft! And who did it? Elizabeth! And my brother Edward's mistress, that slut Jane Shore!

*Hastings:* My lord, how do you know that?

*Richard:* How do I know that? You're defending that whore? You traitor!—Kill this son of a bitch!—Lovell! Ratcliffe! Do it now!

*Lovell and Ratcliffe:* Yes, my lord! At once!

*Richard:* Everyone else, come with me.

*(Everyone leaves except Hastings, Ratcliffe, and Lovell.)*

*Hastings:* Fuck me. I should've fled when I had the chance.—Margaret, you cursed us, and now it falls on me.

*Ratcliffe:* Shit happens.

*Lovell (Pulling Hastings):* Move it. We're going to make this quick.

*Hastings:* Richard, you bastard!—My poor England.—Those poor boys.—You can kill me now, but you'll be dead later. And you'll rot in hell.

*Ratcliffe:* I hear that all the time. Get moving.

*(They all leave.)*

**Act 3, Scene 5.** *Outside the Tower walls. Richard and Buckingham come in wearing old, worn-out armor.*

*Richard:* Buck, how good are you at bullshitting?

*Buckingham:* I can do it if I have to.

*Richard:* Killing our enemies is necessary to our plan, but putting on a good act is just as important.

*Buckingham:* I read you. Where's Catesby?

*Richard:* He's fetching the Lord Mayor.—Here they come now.

*(The Lord Mayor and Catesby come in.)*

*Buckingham:* Lord Mayor—

*Richard:* Watch that drawbridge!

*Buckingham:* I hear a drum!

*Lord Mayor:* What the—

*Richard:* There are enemies all around us!

*Lord Mayor:* Enemies? Oh, my goodness!

*Buckingham (Pointing):* Who's that?

*Richard:* It's okay. It's Lovell and Ratcliffe.

*(Lovell and Ratcliffe come in with Hastings' head.)*

*Lord Mayor:* Hastings?—Oh, my God!

*Richard:* I thought he was my loyal friend. I never suspected what he was really up to. And I never would have found out if he hadn't been having an affair with Jane Shore.

*Lord Mayor:* Oh, my!

*Buckingham:* What a sly son of a bitch. If we hadn't caught him, he would've murdered Gloucester and me in the council room today.

*Lord Mayor:* No!

*Richard:* Do you think we're lying? Do you think we would've killed him if the whole country and our lives weren't at stake?

*Lord Mayor:* Oh, well, in that case—Yes, of course, you had to act quickly.

*Buckingham:* We wanted you to witness the execution, but Lovell and Ratcliffe were a little too hasty. But they had the purest of intentions, you can believe me. Hastings confessed everything in detail—how he was going to murder us. The people must be made to understand that.

*Lord Mayor:* What?—Oh—Yes! Yes! They will. Don't worry. I'll explain everything to them.

*Richard:* We would appreciate that, my Lord Mayor. It's very important to prevent false rumours from spreading.

*Lord Mayor:* You're absolutely right! We'll have no disorder in London as long as I'm Mayor.

*Buckingham:* You're a good man, sir. We knew we could count on you.

*Lord Mayor:* Yes! Yes! Always!—I must go now.

*(The Lord Mayor leaves.)*

*Richard:* Well done, Buck. He's on his way back to the meeting hall. What you have to do now is go there and start spreading the rumour that Edward's children are illegitimate.

*Buckingham:* Ah! Clever!

*Richard:* You should say that Edward was an out-of-control sex fiend, and he was fucking any woman he could get—even servants. And also say that Edward himself was illegitimate. Say that when my mother was pregnant with Edward, my father was fighting in France, and if you count the months, it's impossible that my father was Edward's father. And furthermore, he didn't resemble my father.—But you'd better be vague about all this, because my mother's still alive. Just make vague suggestions. And at the very end, pitch me to the crowd as the next King.

*Buckingham:* I understand perfectly. Leave it to me.

*Richard:* If things go well, bring the crowd to Baynard's Castle. I'll be there with a couple of priests or bishops, like I'm busy praying. They'll fall for it.

*Buckingham:* Okay. I'll see if I can rouse a crowd for you by, say, three or four o'clock.

*Richard:* Excellent.

*(Buckingham leaves.)*

*Richard:* Lovell, you go to Doctor Shaw.—Ratcliffe, you go to Friar Penker.—Tell them to meet me at Baynard's Castle in one hour.

*Ratcliffe:* What about the head?

*Richard:* I'll take it. Just wrap it.

*(Lovell and Ratcliffe wrap Hastings' head in a cloth for Richard, then leave.)*



*Richard (To the audience):* Now I'll issue orders to keep Clarence's brats out of sight and keep anyone from seeing the boys in the Tower.

*(He leaves.)*

**Act 3, Scene 6.** *This scene is deleted.*

**Act 3, Scene 7.** *At Baynard's Castle. Richard and Buckingham come in from opposite sides.*

*Richard:* How did it go?

*Buckingham:* I was met with stony silence.

*Richard:* Did you tell them Edward's kids were illegitimate?

*Buckingham:* Yes. I told them everything you wanted me to say. And at the end I gave you the biggest boost I could—your noble character, your skill as a soldier, your wisdom, your kindness, your modesty—all that. And I finished by saying, "Who wants Richard as the next King?"

*Richard:* And what happened?

*Buckingham:* Nothing. So I pulled the Mayor aside and I said, "What gives?" And he said the people weren't used to being addressed by anyone except city officials. So I grabbed this city attorney and told him to speak to the people, and he just basically repeated what I said, although he just mumbled. And then a few of my friends in the back cheered for you. So I pretended they were speaking for the majority and I thanked them for their support, and then I left right away.

*Richard:* Well, I could've hoped for better. But it might still be okay. We'll see. Is the Mayor coming?

*Buckingham:* Yeah. I told him to bring the citizens.—Listen, this is what you should do. You be with a couple of priests, with a prayer book in your hands—like you said before, looking real religious. And I'll plead with you to accept the Crown, and you act all humble like you don't want it.

*Richard:* Oh, yeah!

*Buckingham:* I'll try to get the Mayor to ask you, too, and then it'll look like you're the people's choice. And then, just when I'm ready to give up on you, you agree reluctantly to be King.

*Richard (To the audience):* This is too fucking cool! We should've been actors!

*(A sound of knocking at the door is heard.)*

*Buckingham:* That'll be the Mayor. You go upstairs and wait. Send Catesby in. He's to say you're busy praying.

*Richard:* Right.

*(Richard leaves. Buckingham goes to the door and admits the Lord Mayor and some citizens. The citizens look dull, as if they have been dragged along and are not really enthusiastic.)*

*Buckingham:* Welcome, my Lord Mayor. And welcome, citizens.

*Lord Mayor:* Is Gloucester here?

*Buckingham:* Yes, but I don't know if he wants to be disturbed. *(Catesby comes in.)* Ah, Catesby. Is his Grace coming down?

*Catesby:* He's busy praying, my lord. He's with two reverend fathers right now.

*Lord Mayor:* Oh! He's praying! *(The Lord Mayor looks at the citizens, and they say "Oh" and "Ah" and nod and look at each other knowingly. However, the citizens will be half-hearted in their reactions throughout this scene.)*

*Buckingham:* Um, Catesby, please tell his Grace that the Lord Mayor and some citizens are here, and we need to talk to him about a matter of great importance.

*Catesby:* Yes, I'll tell him.

*(Catesby leaves.)*

*Buckingham:* He's such a devout man, the Duke of Gloucester—not at all like his brother Edward. England would be so fortunate to have Gloucester as its next King—but I doubt he'd accept it.

*Lord Mayor:* Oh, but he must!

*(Faint murmurs of agreement from the citizens. Catesby returns.)*

*Catesby:* My lord, the Duke is afraid these people are here to do him harm.

*Buckingham:* Oh, no, no. Tell him I give my word that these people are here as friends. Please go and bring him. *(Catesby leaves.)* Richard is so sensitive. It goes with being so spiritual.

*Lord Mayor:* I'm sure it does. *(Faint reaction of agreement from the citizens.)*

*(Richard comes in with two bishops, behind Catesby. Richard is holding a prayer book.)*

*Buckingham (To the Lord Mayor):* What did I tell you?—My lord Gloucester, we apologize for interrupting your prayers, but all of us have an urgent appeal to make.

*Richard:* My first thoughts are always with God, but I didn't mean to be impolite. What is it you would like from me?

*Buckingham:* My lord, England needs you. We all need you—as King. This country has suffered from the shame of your late brother, Edward. We are in a state of confusion. We are in limbo. We are without a King. You are our last hope. You are of true royal stock—a York! By every right of law, and by all the common sense that good men are expected to have, we ask you—humbly and with the greatest love and admiration for you—that you lead us out of the wilderness and accept the Crown of England.

*(Murmurs of agreement from the citizens.)*

*Richard:* Oh, dear!—What shall I do?—You are so kind, all of you. But I hardly feel right to say yes. I am unworthy. And my soul was meant for a more modest life. And besides, you don't really need me. There are others ahead of me in the line of succession. Our dear young Prince Edward—

*Buckingham:* Who is not entitled to the throne! Your brother Edward was supposed to marry a noble lady—your mother will vouch for that—but Elizabeth seduced him to advance herself and her family, and that's how young Edward was born. There's more to the story, but discretion prevents me from telling it. It would hurt certain people. But the point is, your ancestry is not in doubt. It's pure. That's why we need you. *(He looks at the Lord Mayor, who takes the cue.)*

*Lord Mayor:* Yes, my lord! We are all begging you. *(The Lord Mayor looks at the citizens, who react with faint approval.)*

*Richard:* Oh, but the responsibility! How can I? I am so unprepared. And young Prince Edward is such a nice boy.

*Buckingham:* We know you love that boy and his brother as if they were of pure royal blood. And we know you always think of your relatives before you think of yourself.—But we simply will not accept young Edward as King! *(He look at the Lord Mayor and the citizens, and they shake their heads automatically.)*

*Richard:* I'm sorry. Really. *(He clasps his prayer book to his breast, closes his eyes, and looks sad.)*

*Buckingham:* Well, then—I suppose we'll just have to find someone else. What a tragedy for us all.—Thank you for seeing us, my lord. We must be going. *(He winks at Catesby.)*

*Catesby (To Richard):* Please, my lord! For the sake of England!

*Lord Mayor:* Yes! For the sake of England!

*(Murmurs of agreement from the citizens.)*

*Richard:* Well—since you insist—But if there is any criticism later, remember that I didn't want the Crown. You forced me to take it.

*Lord Mayor:* Yes! Yes! Don't worry, my lord! God bless you!

*(The citizens clap weakly.)*

*Buckingham:* Long live King Richard!

*All:* Long live King Richard!

*Buckingham:* Shall we crown you tomorrow, your Grace?

*Richard:* Yes, tomorrow will be fine. I'll see you then. *(To the Bishops)* Come. Let's pray for guidance from the Lord.

*(They all leave, but Richard winks at the audience on the way out.)*

**Act 4, Scene 1.** *Outside the Tower, Queen Elizabeth, the Duchess of York, and Dorset come in on one side; Anne (now married to Richard) comes in on the other side with Clarence's daughter, Margaret.*

*Duchess:* Oh, look! It's Anne and my granddaughter!—It's so good to see you!

*Anne:* Hello!

*Queen Eliz.:* Hello, sister. Now that you're married to Richard, I can call you that. Are you going in the Tower?

*Anne:* Yes. Margaret wants to see her cousins.

*Queen Eliz.:* We all want to see them. We'll go in together. *(Brakenbury comes in.)* Here's the warden.—Lieutenant Brakenbury, how are my boys? We've come to see them.

*Brakenbury:* The boys are just fine, madam. But I'm under strict orders from the King not to let anyone visit them.

*Queen Eliz.:* The King? And who would that be?

*Brakenbury:* Sorry, ha, ha—a slip of the tongue. I mean the Lord Protector. The Duke of Gloucester.

*Anne (To Queen Eliz.):* I knew nothing about this.

*Queen Eliz. (To Brakenbury):* Richard isn't going to let me see my own children?

*Duchess:* I'm their grandmother, and I intend to see them!

*Anne:* And I'm their aunt now, and I want to see them, too. And so does Margaret.

*Brakenbury:* I'm totally sorry. Really. But I'm under orders. Please excuse me.

*(Brakenbury leaves. Then Lord Stanley comes in.)*

*Stanley (To the Duchess):* Well, madam, it appears that in just one hour you'll be the mother-in-law of two queens. *(To Anne)* Madam, you're expected at Westminster Abbey right away. Your husband is being crowned King, and you, of course, will be Queen.

*Queen Eliz:* I think I'm going to faint!

*Anne:* I didn't realize—I never wanted this!

*Dorset (To Queen Eliz.):* Don't be upset, mother.

*Queen Eliz.:* Dorset, don't stay in London. Get out now before you get murdered. Go to France. Go to the Earl of Richmond.

*Stanley (To Dorset):* Yes. You should do that. Richmond's my stepson. I'll write to him, and he'll meet you on the way. You should go now.

*Duchess:* I curse the day I gave birth to Richard.

*Stanley (To Anne):* Madam, I'm supposed to bring you straight back to the Abbey.

*Anne:* I'd rather die.

*Queen Eliz.:* Don't say that. You have to go.

*Anne:* Richard is evil. I cursed him, but he still talked me into marrying him. I must have been crazy. He doesn't love me. He's probably just waiting for the right time to have me murdered, too.

*Duchess:* No, no. You go with Stanley. I'll pray for the angels to watch over you. *(To Queen Eliz.)* You must take sanctuary in the Abbey. As for me, I've lived too long and suffered too much. I don't fear death.

*Queen Eliz. (Looking up at the Tower):* My little boys! *(She bursts into tears. They all leave.)*

**Act 4, Scene 2.** *In the palace. A horn flourish. Richard comes in, dressed as King, with Buckingham, Catesby, Ratcliffe, Lovell, a Page (and optionally an Attendant).*

*King Richard:* Make room.—Buckingham, help me up. *(Buckingham helps him onto the throne.)* Well, here I am at last, Buck—thanks in no small part to your help.

*Buckingham:* Always your faithful servant, my lord.

*King Richard:* Yes. You have been—so far. But now I'm going to put you to the test.

*Buckingham:* In what way, my lord?

*King Richard:* Prince Edward. He's alive, Buck. It's a problem. Can you guess what I'm thinking?

*Buckingham:* No, my lord.

*King Richard:* Both those boys have to be eliminated—the sooner the better. I won't feel secure until they're out of the way—permanently. What do you say to that?

*Buckingham:* Well—I suppose—now that you're King—you can do whatever you want.

*King Richard:* You're being evasive. Would you consent to having them killed?

*Buckingham (Pauses):* Well—

*King Richard:* Would you do it if I asked you to?

*Buckingham (Pauses):* I'd want to think it over.—Would you excuse me?

*King Richard:* Sure. Go on.

*(Buckingham leaves.)*

*Catesby (Aside to someone else):* The King's pissed.

*King Richard:* Buckingham's losing his nerve.—Yo! Page! *(He beckons to the Page, who approaches.)*

*Page:* Yes, my lord?

*King Richard:* You like to hang with the white trash on your days off. Do you know anyone I could hire as a killer?

*Page:* I believe I do, my lord. Someone who needs money.

*King Richard:* Oh, he'll get money. Who is he?

*Page:* His name is James Tyrrel.

*King Richard:* Oh, yeah. I met him once. Okay, go and get him. *(The Page leaves.)* Buckingham has been my right-hand guy for a long time, but that's over with. He's not the same as he used to be. *(Stanley comes in.)* Stanley, wassup?

*Stanley:* Dorset has fled. He's gone to France—to the Earl of Richmond.

*King Richard:* I'm not surprised.—Catesby, come here.

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord?

*King Richard:* Listen, I want you to spread the rumour that my wife, Anne, is very sick. I'm going to give orders to keep her out of sight.

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord.

*King Richard:* And I want you to scout around and find some B-list noble who's broke. I'll want him to marry Clarence's daughter. That'll keep her occupied and out of my way. Her brother I'm not worried about.—Are you listening?

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord!

*King Richard:* Spread the word that Anne is so sick she's likely to die. Go now.

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord.

*(Catesby leaves.)*

*King Richard:* Anne will be out of the way before long. Then I have to marry Elizabeth's daughter to make my position more secure. It's not a foolproof plan, but it'll have to do. I've already wasted plenty of people, so there's no point hesitating about Anne or the boys in the Tower. In for a dime, in for a dollar. Know what I mean?

*Others:* Yes.

*(James Tyrrel comes in.)*

*Tyrrel (Bows):* James Tyrrel, sir—your loyal subject.

*King Richard:* Well, I'll give you a chance to prove it, Tyrrel. I have two enemies I want you to eliminate—the two boys in the Tower. Edward and Richard. Are you up to it?

*Tyrrel:* If I can get to them, I can kill them—no problem, my lord.

*King Richard:* Good man. I'll give you this token. *(Hands him a token.)* Just show it, and you'll get in. You do me this favour, and you'll be in for big rewards.

*Tyrrel:* Consider it done, my lord.

*(Tyrrel leaves. Then Buckingham returns.)*

*Buckingham:* My lord, I've given some thought to that matter concerning the two boys.

*King Richard:* Forget it. I don't need you. Dorset has fled. He's gone to the Earl of Richmond.

*Buckingham:* Yes. I've heard.

*King Richard:* Stanley, Richmond is your stepson—your wife's son. Get whatever information you can out of her.

*Stanley:* Yes, my lord.

*Buckingham:* Uh, my lord, sorry to bring this up, but you did promise me I'd be Earl of Hereford.

*King Richard (Ignoring Buckingham):* Stanley, watch what your wife does. We all know her sympathies are with the Lancasters. I don't want her communicating with Richmond. If she does, I'll hold you responsible.

*Stanley:* Yes, my lord.

*Buckingham:* My lord, what about the earldom of Hereford?

*King Richard (Still ignoring him):* I remember that Henry the Sixth once prophesied that Richmond would be King someday. It could happen.

*Buckingham:* Uh, my lord? Remember you promised me? You know—Earl of Hereford?

*King Richard (Still ignoring him):* You know, there's a castle in Exeter called Rougemont, and one time I was being shown around by the Mayor, and he said, "This is Rougemont." And I thought he said "Richmond," and I jumped, because some Irishman once prophesied that I would die soon after I saw Richmond—ha, ha!

*Buckingham:* My lord? What about the earldom of Hereford?

*King Richard (Pretending to look around):* Is there a parrot in the room?—Oh! It's you, Buckingham! I thought you were a parrot!

*Buckingham:* No, my lord. I wanted to remind you about the earldom of Hereford. You did promise me.

*King Richard:* Oh, don't bother me about that now. I'm not in the mood.—I need some fresh air. Let's go outside.

*(Richard gets up, and everyone follows him out, except for Buckingham.)*

*Buckingham (To the audience):* Fucking hell. After all I've done for that guy.—Hastings used to be his friend, and look what happened to Hastings. I could be next. He has no pity for anyone. He'll kill

anyone he thinks is against him.—Fuck this. I'm getting out of here. I have an estate in Wales. That's where I'm going.

*(Buckingham leaves.)*

**Act 4, Scene 3.** *In the palace. Richard comes in.*

*Richard (To the audience):* The boys in the Tower are dead. Their bodies are buried where no one will ever find them. Clarence's son is out of sight, with lots of toys to play with—defective things he can hurt himself with. I've found a poor noble for Clarence's daughter to marry. He's really horny for young girls, too. Hopefully, she'll be on her back so much she'll forget I even exist. My wife, Anne, is dead—from natural causes, of course. And now I've heard that the Earl of Richmond, also known as Henry Tudor, wants to marry my niece Elizabeth. That's the daughter of Queen Elizabeth I referred to earlier. And that would be very bad for me. Do you see why?—Okay, I'll explain it to you. Richmond is from the Lancasters. He's the one who would be King right now if the Lancasters were in power. My niece Elizabeth is, of course, a York. If Richmond marries her, he effectively reunites the Yorks and Lancasters, and then everyone in England will look to him as the man who ought to be King. And then I'll find myself with very few friends. Therefore, what I have to do is marry the girl before he does.

*(Ratcliffe comes in.)*

*Ratcliffe:* My lord, I have some bad news. The Bishop of Ely has fled. He's gone to the Earl of Richmond. And Buckingham has fled to Wales. He's assembling an army, apparently.

*Richard:* I'm not so worried about Buckingham. I'm more concerned about Ely going over to Richmond. But this is no time for noodling. We have to act. Start rounding up soldiers.

*Ratcliffe:* Yes, my lord!

*(Ratcliffe leaves.)*

*Richard (To the audience):* I hope you're not wearing your best clothes, because the shit's really gonna hit the fan.

*(He leaves.)*

**Act 4, Scene 4.** *In the palace. Queen Margaret comes in.*

*Queen Marg. (To the audience):* So. The glorious summer for the Yorks is over. And I expect there's more grief in store for them. They certainly deserve it.—Oh! I must hide.

*(She steps aside into some place of concealment, which may be suggested, as she is plainly visible to the audience. Then Queen Elizabeth and her mother-in-law, the Duchess of York, come in. They are both in distress.)*

*Queen Eliz.:* My poor boys. Dead. *(She looks up.)* Come to mother, my little angels. Let me know you're here.



*Queen Marg. (Aside):* Tell her she got what she deserves. I warned all of them.

*Duchess:* I can weep no more. My well of tears has gone dry.—Ah, my poor son Edward.

*Queen Marg. (Aside):* I lost a son Edward, too. One dead Edward pays for another.

*Queen Eliz.:* God, how can you let such things happen?

*Queen Marg. (Aside):* Why not? He let my husband and son die.

*Duchess:* If you live too long, you see terrible things. I should've died long ago.

*Queen Eliz.:* I would welcome death, too. Who could know such misery as we do?

*(Queen Margaret steps out of concealment.)*

*Queen Marg.:* Who could know such misery? My misery is equal to yours—and goes back further.

*Duchess:* Well!—Queen Margaret.

*Queen Marg.:* Shall we compare losses? I had an Edward—my son—until Richard killed him. And I had a husband—Henry—until Richard killed him. You had Prince Edward—until Richard killed him. And his little brother Richard, the Duke of York—until Richard killed him.

*Duchess:* It was your army that killed my husband, Richard, Duke of York, and my son Rutland.

*Queen Marg.:* Who killed your son Clarence? Your own son Richard. He had teeth in his mouth before he had eyes. He was born to be a murderer. He's your divine punishment!

*Duchess:* Don't gloat over our losses! I've never gloated over yours!

*Queen Marg.:* Ah, but it's just deserts, madam. And Richard, too, will get the death he so deserves. I want to live to see it so I can say, "The dog is dead!"

*Queen Eliz.:* You were right about Richard. I should have listened.

*Queen Marg.:* Yes. And look at yourself now—a queen in name only, a woman with nothing left. What a tragic figure! When I return to France, the tragedies of the Yorks will be my sole consolation.

*Queen Eliz.:* I would curse Richard if I knew how.

*Queen Marg.:* If you would curse your enemies from the depths of your soul, this is what you must do, madam. You must lie in your bed night after night without sleep. You must be too sick at heart even to eat. You must relive your worst moments over and over. You must absorb your pain into every cell of your body. You must feel nothing but pain and hatred.—And you must remember your children as the sweetest in the world. And you must think of their killer as the worst man in the world.—Do this long enough, madam, and cursing will come as naturally as breathing.

*(Queen Elizabeth bursts into tears. Queen Margaret leaves. The Duchess tries to console Elizabeth.)*

*Duchess:* Don't listen to her, Elizabeth. Don't live for hatred and revenge.

*Queen Eliz. (Composing herself):* If I could show all my anger, I'd feel better. Wouldn't you?

*Duchess:* Yes, I would. And the one who deserves our anger is Richard.

*(A trumpet flourish. Richard comes in with his party of military attendants. He is dressed like them.)*

*Richard:* Well. Are you here to wish me luck before I go into battle?

*Duchess:* What I wish is that I had strangled you the day you were born!

*Queen Eliz.:* Why don't you carve a notch in your crown for every murder you've committed! My sons! My brother!

*Duchess:* Who'll be next—Clarence's little boy?

*Queen Eliz.:* And poor Hastings and Vaughan—where are they?

*Duchess:* Dead! Murdered!

*Richard:* Shut up!

*Duchess:* Don't tell me to shut up! You were always bad—from the very beginning. I've had nothing but grief with you. Either you will die in this battle, as you deserve, or I will kill myself so I never have to see your face again!

*(The Duchess leaves.)*

*Queen Eliz.:* And I wish the same!

*Richard (More conciliatory):* Madam, please! I wanted to speak to you about something important.

*Queen Eliz.:* I have no sons left for you to murder. And as for my daughters, I will put them in a convent so that you have no reason to murder them.

*Richard:* Madam, please give a chance to speak. I want to speak to you about your daughter Elizabeth, whom I consider worthy to be a queen.

*Queen Eliz.:* Keep away from her! I won't see her die, too!

*Richard:* She'd be perfectly safe as my queen.

*Queen Eliz.:* Yes—as safe as her brothers, whom you swore to protect!

*Richard:* Surely you don't think I killed them.

*Queen Eliz.:* You only had to give the order.

*Richard:* Madam, please! Just listen! If I win this war, you and your relatives are going to benefit greatly. Whatever—unhappiness—I may have caused you, I will make up for ten times over. Your daughters will enjoy the highest honours and positions. All I ask is that you forget about any wrongs you believe I've done you.

*Queen Eliz.:* That's asking a lot.

*Richard:* Forget about your own feelings for a moment. Think about Elizabeth's future. Don't you want her to be Queen of England?

*Queen Eliz.:* That depends on who's King.

*Richard:* That would be me, of course.

*Queen Eliz.:* Do you think my daughter would marry the man who murdered her brothers? Not to mention her uncle Clarence, her uncle Rivers, and her aunt Anne.

*Richard:* If I've made mistakes—and perhaps I have—I'm sorry. I can't undo what's been done. I can only make up for it—and I will. I love Elizabeth. I want to marry her. She'll be Queen. I'll give you grandchildren. You'll be happy again. Your son Dorset could return to England. I'll forgive him. I'll give him a high position. I want to make everything up to you. You must give me a chance.

*Queen Eliz.:* And what am I supposed to say to my daughter?

*Richard:* You must explain things to her rationally. Tell her the well-being of England depends on her marrying me. Tell her how much I love her.

*Queen Eliz.:* Empty words!

*Richard:* If I am not sincere, then I pray to God that I should die in battle. This marriage means everything to me—and to England. You must speak for me to your daughter. You must persuade her. *(A pause while Elizabeth is reflecting.)* This is the best thing you can do—for the living—as well as for the dead.

*Queen Eliz.:* I will speak to her. I'll let you know what she thinks.

*Richard:* Give her a kiss from me. *(Queen Elizabeth leaves. To the audience)* I knew I could con her!

*(Ratcliffe comes in, with Catesby behind.)*

*Ratcliffe:* My lord, there's a fleet of ships off the western coast. Word is that Richmond is in command. They intend to land with Buckingham's help.—And our allies in that area have defected to the other side.

*Richard:* Catesby, ride as fast as you can to the Duke of Norfolk.—Ratcliffe, you go to Salisbury. When you get there—*(To Catesby)* Don't just stand there, man!

*Catesby:* What do you want me to say to Norfolk?

*Richard:* Tell him to round up as many soldiers as he can and meet me at Salisbury.

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord!

*(Catesby leaves.)*

*Ratcliffe:* And what am I to do at Salisbury?

*Richard:* No. Wait.—I’ve changed my mind. *(Stanley comes in.)* Stanley, what news?

*Stanley:* Richmond is at sea with a fleet, my lord.

*Richard:* What do you think his intentions are?

*Stanley:* Well—I think he means to take the Crown away from you—no doubt with the encouragement of Dorset, Buckingham, and the Bishop of Ely.

*(Richard paces a bit and then fixes a harsh look on Stanley.)*

*Richard:* And what are your intentions, Stanley—to defect to the other side?

*Stanley:* No, my lord!

*Richard:* Then where the hell is your army? Are they joining up with the rebels in the west?

*Stanley:* No! Absolutely not! They’re in the north.

*Richard:* They’re not much good to me there—are they?

*Stanley:* You haven’t given me any orders. I’ll march them wherever you like.

*(A pause. Richard paces a bit and looks at Stanley narrowly.)*

*Richard:* I think you want to join Richmond. I don’t think I entirely trust you.

*Stanley:* My lord, I’ve never given you any reason to mistrust me. I would never be disloyal to you.

*Richard:* Then go gather your men.—But I shall keep your son George here with me. That way I can be sure of your loyalty—if you get my meaning.

*Stanley:* Yes, my lord.—I’ll go now.

*(Stanley leaves. Then a Messenger comes in.)*

*Messenger:* My lord, Sir Edward Courtney and his brother, the Bishop of Exeter, have assembled an army against us. They’re in Devonshire at this moment.

*(A second Messenger arrives.)*

*Second Messenger:* My lord, the Guilfords in Kent have armed themselves against us. They’re increasing their numbers by the hour.

*(A third Messenger arrives.)*

*Third Messenger:* My lord, the Duke of Buckingham’s army—*(Richard slaps him on the head.)*

*Richard:* God damn it! Doesn’t anyone have any good news for me?

*Third Messenger:* Yes, my lord.—I was going to say that Buckingham’s army was hit by a flash flood. They’re scattered all over the place, and Buckingham is unaccounted for.

*Richard:* Sorry, lad. Here's something to make up for that slap. *(He gives the Messenger a gold coin.)*  
Has anyone offered a reward for the capture of Buckingham?

*Third Messenger:* Yes, my lord.

*(A fourth Messenger comes in.)*

*Fourth Messenger:* My lord, Lovell and Dorset have collected an army in Yorkshire. But I have good news as well. Richmond's fleet has been scattered by a storm. He sent scouts to the coast of Dorsetshire to see if they were on Buckingham's side. They said they were, but Richmond wasn't sure of them, so he's gone back to France.

*Richard:* I wonder about that.—Anyway, we still have enemies to fight here at home. Let's march and get them.

*(Catesby returns, out of breath.)*

*Catesby:* Your Majesty—Buckingham's been captured!

*Richard (With clenched fist):* Yes!

*Catesby:* The bad news is that Richmond has landed his army at Milford.

*Richard:* All right. There's no time to lose. We're marching to Salisbury immediately.—Catesby, you see to it that Buckingham is brought to Salisbury. I want him executed the minute he arrives.

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord!

*(A trumpet flourish, and they all leave.)*

**Act 4, Scene 5.** *In Lord Stanley's house. Stanley comes in with Sir Christopher Urswick, a chaplain.*

*Stanley:* Sir Christopher, I want you to explain to Richmond that I'm on his side, but I can't do anything for him because Richard is holding my son hostage.

*Christopher:* I understand.

*Stanley:* And you can tell him that the Queen has agreed to let him marry her daughter Elizabeth.

*Christopher:* That's mighty good news, sir. If the Yorks and Lancasters can be reunited, it'll be the best thing that's happened to England in a long time.

*Stanley:* Where's Richmond now?

*Christopher:* In Wales.

*Stanley:* Who's joined with him?

*Christopher:* A lot of nobles—Herbert, Talbot, Oxford, Blunt, and plenty of others. He'll have a good-sized army.

*Stanley:* Well, you give him this letter so he knows what my feelings are. *(He gives Christopher a letter.)*

*Christopher:* I will, sir. Good luck.

*(Christopher leaves.)*

**Act 5, Scene 1.** *This scene is deleted (Buckingham's execution).*

**Act 5, Scene 2.** *A camp near Tamworth. The Earl of Richmond comes in with Oxford, Herbert, and Blunt, plus drums and colours.*

*Richmond:* My friends, we've marched a long way with no resistance at all. And now I've received a letter from my stepfather, Lord Stanley, and it's very encouraging. That miserable swine Richard is not far away. He's near Leicester—just one day's march from here. We have a brilliant opportunity to destroy him with one concentrated attack.

*Oxford:* I'm ready.

*Herbert:* A lot of his friends will defect to us at the last minute. You'll see.

*Blunt:* Yes. His only friends are those who have stuck with him out of fear. If they get a chance to run, they'll leave him.

*Richmond:* Oxford—Herbert—Blunt—God is with us. I can already taste victory. Let's go.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 3.** *Bosworth Field. Richard comes in, dressed for battle, along with Norfolk, Ratcliffe, the Earl of Surrey, and a few Soldiers. Surrey looks depressed.*

*Richard:* Bosworth Field. We'll make camp here.—Surrey, you look depressed.

*Surrey:* No, no, I'm fine.

*Richard (To Soldiers):* Put my tent up here. *(The Soldiers go to work.)* Norfolk, what would you estimate the enemy's strength to be?

*Norfolk:* Six or seven thousand—maximum.

*Richard:* Then we have them outnumbered three to one. And Richmond doesn't know squat about warfare compared to me. If everyone stays focused and follows orders, we'll win.—Come on, let's have a look at the terrain.

*(Richard and the nobles leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 4.** *In Richmond's camp. Richmond comes in with Sir William Brandon, Oxford, Dorset, Herbert, and Blunt.*

*Richmond:* What a brilliant sunset! I take it as a good sign, gentlemen.—Brandon, you'll carry the flag tomorrow.

*Brandon:* Thank you, my lord!

*Richmond:* We're outnumbered, so it's all about organization. Every commander will have responsibility for his own forces. After all, you know your own men better than anyone else does.—Oxford (*Richmond indicates each noble so the audience knows who is who*)—you and Brandon—and Herbert—will stick close to me. The Earl of Pembroke will have his regiment apart.—Blunt, you tell Pembroke I want to see him in my tent at once.

*Blunt:* Right.

*Richmond:* Do you know where Lord Stanley is camped?

*Blunt:* He's set up at least a half mile south of Richard.

*Richmond:* Do you think you can carry a letter to him safely?

*Blunt:* I'll do it.

*Richmond:* Stanley may be able to help us indirectly, even though he's stuck on Richard's side. (*Gives Blunt a letter*) Be careful. Good luck. (*Blunt leaves.*) Okay, let's go to my tent, and we'll go over the battle plan in detail.

(*They leave.*)

**Act 5, Scene 5.** *In Richard's tent. Richard, Ratcliffe, Norfolk, and Catesby come in.*

*Richard:* What time is it?

*Catesby:* Nine o'clock, my lord. Supper time.

*Richard:* I'm not hungry. Is all my gear ready?

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord.

*Richard:* Norfolk, make sure you have trustworthy men on guard tonight. I want you moving with your troops before sunrise. Go now.

*Norfolk:* Yes, my lord.

(*Norfolk leaves.*)

*Richard:* Catesby, send a messenger to Stanley and tell him likewise. I want him moving before sunrise, and he'd better do it if he ever wants to see his son again.

*Catesby:* Yes, my lord.

(*Catesby leaves.*)

*Richard:* Ratcliffe, I want my white horse tomorrow. And double-check my lances.

*Ratcliffe:* I'll see to it, my lord.

*Richard:* Did you see Lord Northumberland?

*Ratcliffe:* Yes. He and Surrey are giving their troops a pep talk.

*Richard:* I hope it does some good.—All right, then. Pour me some wine before you go, would you? I'm not feeling as eager as I should be. (*Ratcliffe pours him some wine.*) Make sure my guards are where they should be. Come back a couple of hours before sunrise and help me suit up.

*Ratcliffe:* Yes, my lord.

(*Ratcliffe leaves. Richard drinks some wine and lies down on his cot to sleep.*)

**Act 5, Scene 6.** *This scene is deleted (Stanley meets secretly with Richmond). Scene 5 will segue into Scene 7, the ghost scene.*

**Act 5, Scene 7.** *Richard is sleeping in his tent. The stage is lit in a dim blue light. All the sound effects and ghost voices in this scene will be pre-recorded. First we hear hushed voices (suitably amplified) saying "Richard...Richard...Richard..." Then from both sides, the figures of Richard's victims appear, moving very slowly, arms outstretched. They are all wearing black cloaks and hoods. They converge toward the sleeping Richard. Then the voices speak in normal voices: "Murderer...murderer...murderer..." Buckingham's voice must be heard clearly, since his execution scene was deleted, so the audience is sure he was executed. Richard awakens and is terrified by the ghosts converging on him. He is frozen.*

*Ghost voices:* Murderer...murderer...You will die tomorrow...You will die tomorrow.

*Richard:* No!—You're dead!—You're not real!

*Anne's voice:* The evil soul shall be destroyed.

*Richard:* This is a dream! Go away! You're not real!

*Anne's voice:* The evil soul shall be destroyed.

*Richard:* No!—No!

(*The ghosts converge and block Richard from view. Richard screams. Then the stage goes dark. A quick segue to the continuation of the scene finds Richard lying in bed awkwardly, with the stage in normal light. Richard awakens with a violent start. Upset, he pours some wine to steady his nerves.*)

*Richard (Sitting on the edge of his cot, hands covering his face):* Guilty...guilty.

(*Ratcliffe comes in.*)

*Ratcliffe:* My lord!

*Richard (Startled):* What!—Oh—Ratcliffe.

*Ratcliffe:* Time to get up, sir. All the commanders are getting suited up right now.

*Richard:* Ratcliffe—I had such a terrible dream. For the first time in my life—I feel afraid.

*Ratcliffe:* Oh, no, my lord. A dream is only a dream, no matter how bad it is.



*Richard:* I'd sooner face ten thousand enemy soldiers than the shadows that came to me in my sleep. *(After a pause, he gets up decisively.)* Ratcliffe, come with me. I want to eavesdrop on the commanders in their tents and find out if any of them are planning to desert me.

*(They leave.)*

**Act 5, Scene 8.** *Richmond is in his tent, suiting up. Several lords come in.*

*Lords:* Good morning, sir!

*Richmond:* Good morning!—I slept so long I can hardly believe it. What must you think of me! A lazy slug for a general!

*A Lord:* No, sir. It's good that you're well-rested.

*Richmond:* What a wonderful dream I had!

*A Lord:* What was it, sir?

*Richmond:* The ghosts of all of Richard's victims came to me and said, "Victory is yours. You shall avenge us."

*A Lord:* Well! Who could ask for a better sign than that!

*Richmond:* What time is it?

*A Lord:* Four o'clock. All the men are pumped up and ready to fight.

*Richmond:* Good. I'll go out and say a few words to them.

*(Richmond and the lords leave. After a few seconds we hear the sound of cheering offstage.)*

**Act 5, Scene 9.** *In Richard's camp. Richard is with Ratcliffe and many Soldiers.*

*Richard:* The sky is full of dark clouds. It's a bad sign. I don't like it.

*Ratcliffe:* The same sky looks down on both sides, my lord.

*Richard:* Yes, yes. You're quite right.

*(Norfolk rushes in.)*

*Norfolk:* The enemy is in sight, my lord!

*Richard:* Right! Signal Stanley to move his forces. We'll have our foot soldiers in a line across the width of the plain. Norfolk, you'll lead them. Surrey will lead the cavalry, and they'll be on the flanks. And the archers will be in the middle. What do you think?

*Norfolk:* Sounds good to me, my lord.

*Richard:* I'll give the Earl of Richmond a lesson on how to fight. This is all about killing. *(He addresses the Soldiers. Larger numbers are suggested.)* Men! You know what you have to do! Throw away your fears and smother your conscience! This is war! You go forth to kill our enemies! They are

the scum of England—traitors, criminals, low-lives, half-wit peasants, losers, and vermin! They are shit! And they are led by a weakling who's afraid to get his shoes wet! Are you going to let these bastards—these beggars—steal our lands and rape our wives and daughters?

*Soldiers:* No! No!

*Richard:* Then kill them! Rip them to pieces! Let the field run red with their blood!

*(The Soldiers cheer and yell. Then a Messenger arrives out of breath.)*

*Richard:* What news? What does Stanley say?

*Messenger:* My lord—Stanley will not come.

*Richard:* That fucking traitor!—Chop his son's head off!

*Norfolk:* It'll have to wait, my lord. The enemy is past the marsh.

*Richard:* Let's go, men! Nothing can stop us! Our patron Saint George will make us dragons on the battlefield! Get them! After them!

*(They all rush out.)*

**Act 5, Scene 10.** *Bosworth Field. A gauze screen (or similar) covers the front of the stage. Sounds of battle are heard — loud and violent — including horses. The silhouettes of the fighting men are cast on the screen from back-lighting. This will go on for perhaps a minute. Then the players must leave and the screen be removed quickly, preferably without a curtain-down. Catesby now comes in from one side, and Norfolk meets him coming in from the other side.*

*Catesby:* Norfolk! Hurry, man! The King's lost his horse! He's fighting on foot! We have to help him!

*(A trumpet alarm. Richard comes in, out of breath.)*

*Richard:* I need a horse! Get me a goddamn horse!

*Catesby:* I'll find one for you, my lord! Stay out of the fighting until I get back!

*(Catesby leaves quickly.)*

*Richard:* No! I'm going to kill Richmond! There must be a half dozen Richmonds out there! I killed five of them, but he's still out there! Just get me a goddamn horse!

*(Norfolk hesitates because he is unsure whether to follow the order or stay behind to protect Richard.)*

*Norfolk:* Yes!—Protect yourself, my lord! Wait for us!

*(Norfolk leaves quickly.)*

**Act 5, Scene 11.** *Bosworth Field. The theatre goes completely dark before the curtain rises. This scene will have a background of pre-recorded electronic sound effects. First we hear a loud, deep, drum-like pounding — slow and regular. Then, as the curtain rises, a high-pitched screech like several*

*dissonant violins is added. This will stay steady. Now a powerful red strobe light illuminates the theatre. A metallic clanging of swords is now added. This will be regular. (Stage smoke is optional.) The curtain up reveals Richard and Richmond facing each other. They will sword-fight in very slow motion and will not speak. This action will go on for perhaps two minutes. The metallic clanging will stop, and this is Richmond's cue to strike the fatal blow. Still in slow motion, Richmond strikes and Richard falls. Richmond stands over Richard's body and remains absolutely still. The sounds effects gradually ebb away, and the lighting gradually reverts to normal. Then there is a victorious sound of trumpets, and Stanley and the other lords come in, armed. They look at Richard's body and then together embrace Richmond, who now relaxes.*

*Lords:* Well done, my lord! Well done! The monster is dead! We've won!

*Richmond:* You've all done well. All of you. I'm proud of you.

*Stanley:* You're the new King now, my lord! And thank God for it!

*Richmond:* Stanley! Your son George! Is he alive?

*Stanley:* He's safe.

*Richmond:* That's good, Stanley. I'm very glad.—Have any nobles been killed?

*Stanley:* Some on both sides.

*Richmond:* They'll all be buried properly. Proclaim a pardon for all the soldiers on Richard's side who are willing to return to us.

*Stanley:* Yes, my lord.—Are you going to marry young Elizabeth?

*Richmond:* Yes. And then the Yorks and the Lancasters will be reunited forever, and there will be no more bloodshed, hatred, and misery. The red rose and the white rose, Lord Stanley—they are not so different, are they?

*Stanley:* No, my lord.

*Richmond:* They both need the sun, the rain, and the good earth of England—and they are both beautiful.

**END**

Posted on October 6, 2010 by Crad Kilodney, Toronto, Canada.

(Index to the Series appears on — <https://cradkilodney.wordpress.com/2010/10/07/> )